

**FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY**  
**MEDICAL FACT SHEET**



Federal Protective Service  
Special Operations Division  
**PROTECTIVE MEDICINE BRANCH**  
Mission Support Center  
Bethesda, MD 20814



January 24, 2007

---

**Norovirus Precautions**

A contagious viral infection, Norovirus, is now circulating through the Nation with a very high incidence in the Boston area. Another outbreak recently closed the Washington Dulles Hilton Hotel, and thus far has sickened over 100 students at Radford University in Virginia. The symptoms associated with this virus are acute-onset vomiting, watery non-bloody diarrhea with abdominal cramps, and nausea with a chance of vomiting. Vomiting, however, is more common in children. Low-grade fever also occasionally occurs. Dehydration is the most common complication, especially among the young and elderly, and may require medical attention. Symptoms usually last 24 to 60 hours. Recovery is usually complete and there is no evidence of any serious long-term consequences.

Noroviruses are transmitted primarily through the fecal-oral route, either by consumption of fecally contaminated food or water, or by direct person-to-person spread. Although aerosolization of vomitus may represent another mechanism of spread, there is no evidence that infection occurs through the respiratory system. Personnel are encouraged to incorporate standardized precautions into their daily routine. The Protective Medicine Branch suggests the following measures be adopted:

- Hand washing is the single best way to limit the spread of the virus.
  1. Wet hands with very warm water and apply a copious quantity of soap.
  2. Rub hands together for at least 15 seconds covering all surfaces including hands, fingers, and thumbs.
  3. Rinse with very warm water.
  4. Utilize paper towels to dry hands if possible. Damp cloth towels may harbor germs. Properly discard paper towels after use.
  5. Alcohol-based hand disinfectant and antiseptic towelettes are not the optimal disinfectant agents in this case, but should be employed if soap and water are not available.
- If symptoms of viral infection develop, personnel should ensure proper hydration during the course of sickness.
- Consult with your medical provider if symptoms persist.